

Cedar House School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC040058
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Inspector	Stewart Waddell
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	16 November 2006

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Cedar House is a co-educational special school for children exhibiting emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school caters for children of either gender aged 7 to 16 years on a day or residential basis. At the time of inspection there were 41 residential boarding pupils accommodated. The school is situated close to the centre of the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale, which is within easy travelling distance of the larger towns of Kendal and Morecambe, and the city of Lancaster. The residential accommodation comprises of five separate residential units, each with its own facilities. Three of the residential units house only male boarders, one houses female boarders and the other houses a mix of male and female boarders.

Summary

The purpose of the inspection was to assess all the key standards and to ascertain how the school meets these standards, and assess all six outcomes.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations made following the last inspection of the home carried out in November 2006. No major issues or concerns arising from the last inspection. Various areas of the residential facilities, such as the school dining room, have been refurbished and re-decorated, with young people's views sought on the alterations made. New furnishings have been installed in various areas. The school have introduced a colour coding system in their menu's which highlight for young people types of food that are healthier for them to eat. The school completed a survey in September 2007 that gave parents and carers the opportunity to state their views about the services the school provides.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school employ a qualified nurse who has responsibility for ensuring young people's health needs are addressed. Each young person resident has an 'Individual Health Plan' in place that covers all areas required. Informative health records are kept on each young person. Young people receive regular height, weight and eye sight tests. All medical, dental and optician appointments are recorded and records of accidents maintained. All medication is kept securely. Each residential unit medicine cabinets sited in their 'sleeping in' rooms. A detailed record is kept of the contents of all medicine cabinets. First aid boxes are available on each residential unit and are regularly checked and restocked as needed. If relevant risk assessments allow young people are able to administer their own medication. Appropriately signed medical consent forms are obtained for all young people. Any medication given is appropriately recorded. Records are kept if young people refuse to take prescribed medication and also if they show any adverse reaction to medication taken. All young people are registered with a local doctors practice who hold weekly surgeries at the school. The school ensure all young people receive regular dental check ups and dental treatment when required. The school nurse and senior care staff hold the four-day first-aid qualification. All other staff hold basic first-aid certificates. All staff with responsibility for administering medication have received appropriate training. These actions show the school take all reasonable measures to ensure young peoples health needs are met.

The school employ the services of various health specialists to provide individual support and advice to young people. They also provide advice, support and training for staff. The services of specialist counsellors have been obtained to work with specific young people when required. These actions show the school take all reasonable measures to ensure specialist support and advice is available for young people, and staff, if required. The school is in a local area 'Food Partnership' scheme, and is a registered training centre for this scheme. The kitchen supervisor has responsibility for overseeing the school menu's and food provided. The views of relevant other professionals and young people are taken in to account when forming menus. Menu's are colour coded, highlighting healthier foods and indicating which foods should not be eaten too often. Young people's views on the food provided are sought and taken in to account. Young people spoken to said the food provided at the school was 'good' or 'okay'. Meal times are supervised and well organised, and the meals provided are appropriate. Options, including a vegetarian option, are available at all meal times. The school dining room has been refurbished and redecorated since the last inspection, with new dining tables and chairs installed. Young people's views were sought before making these alterations. Special diets can be catered for. Young people can prepare themselves meals, snacks and drinks on the residential units. All care staff have received appropriate basic food hygiene training. Older pupils also have the opportunity to gain external accredited awards in food hygiene and food preparation. These actions show young people are offered a balanced, healthy diet, and any special dietary needs they may have are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's privacy is respected. The school have appropriate policies in place that advise staff how to work in ways that give appropriate regard to young people's privacy. All young people have an individual locker for safe storage of any personal items they wish to store. All residential units have payphones for young people's use that are sited in areas that give users appropriate privacy. On occasions it has proven necessary to conduct a search of young people's bedrooms or belongings. All such searches are appropriately recorded and the documentation used for this meets with the requirements. Written records are kept of any valuable items young people bring to the school with them. The school have suitable complaints policies, practices and procedures in place. Young people and their parents and carers are provided with information on the various ways they can make a complaint. Young people spoken to said they knew how to make a complaint and that they felt staff would deal with it 'fairly'. Staff receive training on the school's complaints procedures during their induction training. Young people have made 12 formal complaints since the last inspection. All have been suitably addressed. These actions show young people are aware of how to make a complaint and will use the school's complaints system if necessary. The 'named Person' for child protection issues has received appropriate training for this role. All staff, including ancillary staff, have received appropriate training in the home's child protection procedures. Staff from various departments interviewed all gave suitable responses to child protection scenario's put to them. The school appropriately refer any child protection issues to the relevant agencies. The school keep detailed records of any child protection referral and investigation that enables monitoring of any referral from notification to outcome. Records viewed show the school appropriately notify all relevant agencies of any significant incident. These actions show the school take all reasonable measures to protect young people from abuse. Any issues of bullying are suitably addressed. The school have appropriate policies and procedures in place to address any such issues. The young person's handbook clearly states 'bullying is not allowed' and encourages young people to tell staff if

they are being bullied. Young people the inspectors spoke to stated bullying was not a 'big thing' for them at the school, and said staff would address any incidents of bullying if it was brought to their attention. These actions show that the school take suitable measures to ensure young people are not subjected to bullying at the school. All staff receive training in the school's preferred method of physical intervention, 'Team Teach'. Refresher training is delivered annually. Ancillary staff have receive training that allows them to identify methods of physical restraints being used should they witness a physical restraint. There has been a reduction in the number of physical restraints carried out compared to a similar period a year ago. Care staff use other strategies and techniques and avoid the use of physical restraints if possible. Appropriate written records of all incidents of physical restraint are kept. The school operate a 'grades' system to encourage young people to develop, and maintain, an acceptable level of behaviour. Younger pupils are on a daily 'grades' system whilst older pupils are on a 'weekly' grades system. Young people spoken to can clearly detailed the 'grades', rewards and sanctions systems. Appropriate written records of any sanctions applied are kept. The school have introduced initiatives to try to help young people relax and address behavioural issues. These actions show the school have a suitable behaviour management system in place that is clearly understood by young people and staff. The school have good health and safety systems in place. The person responsible for overseeing health and safety issues has received appropriate training for this role. Other senior staff hold certificated health and safety awards. 'Risk Management Safety Audits' are carried out by an external firm of health and safety specialists. Daily health and safety checks are completed on the school's playground area. Regular health and safety checks are carried out on all residential and school areas. The school involve young people in these checks and they assist the head of care to do other regular health and safety checks. All relevant fire alarm tests, emergency lighting tests and fire equipment checks have been carried out. Fire drills are regularly carried out. Regular safety checks on electrical equipment and installations are carried out. Required annual safety checks on gas installations and boilers are carried out. Annual safety checks on cold water storage tanks carried out. Relevant risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed and amended as necessary. All taps for use by young people have been fitted with regulators to ensure hot water provided does not exceed 43 degrees C. These actions show the school take suitable measures to ensure young people live in a safe and secure environment. The school operate good recruitment procedures that meet the requirements. All required pre-employment checks are carried out and staff recruitment records are well maintained. These actions show the school take suitable measures to ensure staff employed are suitable to be working with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has an 'Individual Care and Education Plan' that identifies their care and educational needs, and shows how these will be addressed. Young people have the opportunity to study for accredited educational qualifications and have areas where they can study in private if they wish. Care staff are allocated some working hours during classroom days to support teaching staff and some education staff work some care hours. Young people spoken to said they would be sitting exams. Young people have the opportunity to go on work experience placements. The school have good links with other educational establishments and young people from the school have attended vocational training courses at local colleges. Young people are involved in environmental work in a local forest. The school run 'Enterprise' activities where young people are involved in various educational activities to raise funds that are donated to charities. These action show young people's educational needs are being well met. Young

people are offered a range of activities at the school. Generally, young people were positive in their comments about the activities offered. All activities are risk assessed. Young people have the opportunity to join local youth groups if they wished. The school offer organised activities on various nights of the week. The school use local facilities regularly and also hire facilities at other local schools for leisure activities. The school have playground areas for young people's use, with young people being involved in the designing of such areas. Young people informed inspectors they had been on various trips and outings. Senior staff spoken to said they were given 'reasonable' funds to provide leisure activities and trips out. Each residential unit has good facilities for indoor leisure and recreational activities. Staff ensure any computer games played, or video or dvd viewed, are age appropriate. The school have four mini buses and one 'people carrier' enabling them to transport young people to various locations for activities and outings. These actions show young people's activity and leisure needs are well addressed. Individual support is given to young people when required or requested. They have access to the services of the various specialist professionals. Specialist staff who work at the school have compiled a very informative booklet giving advice and information about various relevant disorders including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, (ADHD), and on how to work with young people who may have such disorders. Inspectors observed staff working individually with young people at various times during the inspection. Staff spoken with said they receive training on any specific skills needed to meet individual young people's needs. 'Individual Behaviour Management Plans' are compiled on all young people, and they take in to account any medical concerns. These actions show the school take suitable measures to ensure young people receive individual support when required.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's views and opinions are regularly sought. The main forum for this is the weekly 'residential unit meetings'. The minutes of each meeting are recorded. Some residential units keep more detailed minutes than others with some minutes containing little relevant information and not showing clearly how issues raised by young people have been addressed. Other systems the school use for obtaining young people's views are the school council forum, online surveys and polls, and regular meetings of young people with their key worker. Key workers maintain regular contact with parents and carers, keeping them informed of young people's progress. The school have used surveys and questionnaires to obtain parent and carers' views on the service they school provide. Parents and carers are generally positive in their comments about the service the school provides. All parents and carers receive a copy of the school's 'Parents Handbook' before their child comes to the school. These actions show that the school actively seek the views of young people accommodated and their parents and carers, and that parents and carers are informed about the schools policies and procedures. Senior staff at the school maintain regular contact with placing authorities. Placing authorities were positive in their comments about the service the school provides. Care staff have formed good working relationships with young people and there are good interactions between staff and young people. Young people spoken to are mostly positive in their comments about the care staff that work with them and the care they receive. This shows young people accommodated are generally happy with the care they receive at the school. The school have appropriate admissions procedures in which the 'Pupil Liaison Officer' plays a key role. Young people visit the school before admission, and are informed about which residential unit they are to be accommodated in. Young people are given relevant information about the school, and are provided with a copy of the schools 'Young People's handbook'. This shows the school take suitable measures to

ensure young people are helped to settle in to school life. Each young person have appropriate an individual care and education plan. The various documents used detail how young people's needs are to be addressed, and set targets to be achieved. The plans are regularly reviewed. Key workers address needs and targets to be met with young people at their fortnightly meetings. The school work with placing authorities to ensure that, where relevant, statutory 'Looked After Children' reviews take place within permitted timescales. Young people's files contain a detailed front sheet containing essential information. These actions show the school ensure young people have care and education plans in place, and that they take suitable measures to ensure they obtain essential information about young people. The school assist and encourage young people to maintain regular contact with parents, carers and friends. Young people are permitted to have mobile phones, subject to agreement on use. Camera phones are not permitted, and staff members are not allowed to carry camera phones when on duty. Where possible, young people at the school have regular weekend home leave during term time.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The school supply all school uniform clothing, bedding, linen and other essentials. Young people can bring their own duvet covers to school to personalise their bedroom areas. Young people wear their own clothing during care hours. The school provide a weekly pocket money allowance for all young people who board. The levels of pocket money given is based on age and what grades the young person is on in the school's behaviour management grading system. Young people spoken to detailed the pocket money system to the inspectors, showing they fully understand the pocket money and reward systems. Records of all monies given to young people are suitably recorded. Individual inventories of any 'valuables' young people have is kept. These actions show the school ensure young people's personal requisite needs are being met. There is a leavers programme in place for senior pupils who are preparing to leave school at the end of the current school year. It aims to help young people develop independent living skills to prepare them for adult life. The residential units accommodating senior boys and girls both contain independent living unit areas that give young people the opportunity to live semi-independently and develop independent living skills. Senior staff spoken to said they adopt a flexible attitude with young people in these units, some of whom occasionally opt to take their evening meals with other pupils in the school dining room. The leavers programme is designed to also allow young people to have the opportunity of gaining accredited educational qualifications. The Connexions organisation visit the school weekly to work with senior pupils. These actions show the school ensure they give young people the opportunity to develop a range of independent living skills. Cedar House is situated within easy walking distance of the centre of the market town of Kirby Lonsdale. It is also within easy travelling distance of the larger towns of Kendal and Morecambe, and the city of Lancaster. Systems have been put in place to ensure privacy. Residential units are generally organised by the boarders chronological age. Generally, the residential units present as comfortable living areas that staff and young people have personalised to give them a homely feel. Young people were generally positive in their views about their bedrooms and the residential units they live in. The residential units are well maintained and suitably furnished and decorated. New furniture has been installed in several areas. Young people are involved in the process of ensuring accommodation standards are maintained. Overall, the school provide a good standard of accommodation for young people who board. Each residential unit contains sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities for young people accommodated. All bathroom, shower and toilet areas are suitably decorated and

maintained, and are kept clean and tidy. All doors on such facilities have appropriate locks to ensure privacy for young people when using them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school have a written statement of purpose that accurately describes the school's aims, and how they will care for young people accommodated. The statement was reviewed and updated in September 2007. The school has other brochures and leaflets that are available for people wishing for information about the school. The school produce a young person's handbook and a parents handbook. These actions show the school ensure young people and their parents and carers are provided with relevant information about the school. Young people's files contain relevant information and are kept securely. These actions show the school maintain appropriate records. The school currently maintain a staffing ratio of one care staff to every three young people during care hours. There are enough staff on duty on each shift to meet the needs of the young people accommodated. Each duty team has at least one 'floating staff' member who team leaders can allocate to any residential unit to assist. The school ensure each residential unit has a staff member on sleep in duty each night. Two waking night staff patrol the school throughout the night, covering all the residential accommodation areas. Any staff absences were suitably covered. The care staff team is a mix of genders. These actions show the school is suitably staffed during care hours. There is a good staff training programme in place. The school have good access to the 'parent' organisation's training provider whose headquarters are sited some four miles away. The school hold regular 'inset training days' for staff that are held immediately prior to the beginning of school terms. The school produce documentation showing how the work they do with young people relates to outcomes detailed under the 'Every Child Matters' guidance. The school maintain a training grid analysis that enables them to keep a personal training profile on each staff member. There is also a good National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training programme in place for all staff and 86% of the care staff team hold relevant NVQ qualifications. All new staff must complete the organisations detailed induction training programme. Staff are positive in their comments about the training provided and state any specialist training required to ensure they could meet a young person's needs is provided. If staff identify specific training courses they personally wish to do, the school give these serious consideration. These actions show the school take suitable measures to ensure they have an appropriately qualified and trained care staff team. The school benefits from having a consistent, settled care staff team in place delivering a consistency of care for young people. All staff, including ancillary staff, receive formal supervision with a frequency that meets, and in many instances exceeds, the requirements. All staff with responsibility for supervising other staff have received appropriate training in supervision skills. Good systems are in place to allow monitoring of the frequency of supervision for each individual staff member. All staff receive annual appraisal or annual performance management reviews. All staff sign their supervision records and receive copies of the minutes of supervision sessions. Care staff meetings are held fortnightly. Residential unit staff meetings are held regularly, and the school hold full staff meetings at least once every school term. The 'senior management' team meet weekly, as do the team leaders and senior care staff. All staff interviewed hold positive views about the support they receive from senior staff. Counselling support is available for staff if required. This shows staff at the school are suitably supervised and supported. There is an experienced senior management team in place. The head of care and a senior staff member from the education department are the schools 'Deputy Heads'. The school have a 'Strategic Management' team who meet regularly. The school hold the 'Investors in People' award. The

head of care has the responsibility for managing the residential care department and holds appropriate qualifications for his role and has received other appropriate training. The school is efficiently managed and run. Senior staff regularly monitor and review relevant practices. The school have good monitoring systems that enable them to identify any areas of concern. Senior staff monitor all areas detailed by Standard 32.2 of the residential special school NMS with the frequency required. The head teacher produces a written report on the operation of the school each term that includes detailed, specific information on the monitoring of significant incidents. The parent organisations 'Quality Assurance' team carry half-termly monitoring visits to the school. A comprehensive report is produced that covers all areas required. The head teacher compiles an action plan in response to each report. These actions show the parent organisation regularly monitor the operation of the school.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider reviewing their methods of recording the minutes of young people's residential unit meetings(NMS2).

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.